

Half an hour sufficed to bring them half-way up the peak. Then Fritz, who was in front, let a cry of surprise escape him.

All stopped, looking at him.

"What is that, up there?" he said, pointing to the extreme top of the cone*

A stick was standing upright there, a stick five or six feet long, fixed between the highest rocks.

"Can it be a branch of a tree, with all the leaves stripped off?" said Frank.

"No; that is not a branch," Captain Gould declared.

"It is a stick—a walking-stick!" Fritz declared. "A stick which has been set up there."

"And to which a flag has been fastened," the boatswain added; "and the flag is still there!"

A flag at the summit of this peak!

Yes; and the breeze was beginning to stir the flag, although from this distance the colours could not be identified.

"Then there are inhabitants on this island!" Frank exclaimed.

"Not a doubt of it!" Jenny declared.

"Or if not," Fritz went on, "it is clear at any rate, that someone has taken possession of it."

"What island is this, then?" James Wolston

demanded.